DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 149 SO 031 450

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TITLE Broadcast Views: Sports and the Law.
INSTITUTION Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles, CA.
PUB DATE 1996-00-00
NOTE 56p.; For related lesson plans, see SO 031 448-452.
AVAILABLE FROM Constitutional Rights Foundation, 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005 ($3.95). Tel: 213-487-5590; Fax: 213-386-0459; Web site: http://www.crf-usa.org/.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Athletics; Broadcast Journalism; Citizenship Education; Intermediate Grades; Law Related Education; *Mass Media Role; News Reporting; Role Playing; Secondary Education; Simulation; *Social Responsibility; Social Studies; *Thinking Skills
IDENTIFIERS Constitutional Rights Foundation

ABSTRACT

This lesson plan uses students' interest in sports to teach good citizenship. With its focus on rules, responsibility, conflict resolution, and teamwork, the unit emphasizes the development of critical thinking, decision-making, and citizenship skills in young people. This lesson plan is part of a series of fully prepared, interactive classroom lesson plans offered by the Sports and the Law program of the Constitutional Rights Foundation. Each lesson includes detailed teacher instructions, background information, and student handouts. This lesson explores the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of the media in the world of sports. Students roleplay athletes and reporters and prepare and present a mock television sports broadcast. (BT)

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BROADCAST VIEWS

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BROADCAST VIEWS

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Introduction

Constitutional Rights Foundation's *Sports and the Law* program uses students' interest in sports to teach good citizenship. By learning how rules—on and off the playing field—relate to society, students acquire knowledge necessary to become responsible citizens and effective participants in our democracy. CRF believes that good sportsmanship is good citizenship. With a focus on rules, responsibility, conflict resolution, and teamwork, *Sports and the Law* emphasizes the development of critical thinking, decision-making, and citizenship skills in young people.

This mini-unit is part a series of fully prepared, interactive classroom lesson plans offered by the Sports and the Law program. Each mini-unit illustrates important aspects of law and society and promotes an understanding of law-related concepts by linking the excitement of sports to broader social issues.

Overview

This three-lesson unit explores the roles, tasks, and responsibilities of the media in the world of sports.

In Lesson One, students take the role of reporters to interview athletes and other sports figures in a simulated press conference.

In Lesson Two, students work in small groups to combine the information from their interviews (Lesson One) with other sports news to prepare a mock television sportscast.

In Lesson Three, students present the mock television sportscasts they prepared in Lesson Two. Finally, students evaluate each other's sportscasts and analyze the broader role of the media in society.

Objectives

Students will:

- Apply interviewing, writing, and other reporting skills to hypothetical sports scenarios.
- Rank news information in order of importance, relevance, and fairness.
- Plan, write and present news information.
- Evaluate the role and responsibility of the media in accurately covering sports and broader news issues.

Lesson One: Press Conference Simulation

Materials and Preparation

- **Handout A—Sports and the Media**
- **Handout B—Sports Wire Stories**—1 per student
- **Handout C—The Inside Track**—1 per athlete or sports figure
- **Reporter's Handbook**—1 per news team reporter
- **Press Passes**—1 per news team reporter

Note: The Reporter's Handbook includes space for students to write interview questions and record their answers. It can be reproduced and assembled for student use by following these simple steps:

1. Pre-set your photocopy machine to reproduce one-sided masters onto two-sided copies.
2. Arrange the six one-sided handouts entitled **Reporter's Handbook 1—6** in your photocopy machine.
3. Run a single test copy. Check that you are reproducing the Reporter's Handbook in the proper sequence.

   Fold the full-size (8 1/2"x 11") two-sided copies in half.
4. Reproduce enough copies of the Reporter's Handbook to give to each student.

In addition, each network newsgroup has its own identifying logo on its press passes.

- **Handout D—Sports Scoreboard**—1 per news team
- **Handout E—Broadcast Worksheet**—1 per news team

Note: In this unit, five students will be asked to play the roles of athletes or other sports figures who are being interviewed at a press conference. You may want to use **Handouts B** and **C** to help prepare these students ahead of time to develop the roles of the athletes and sports figures they will play at the press conference.

You may want to role-play one of the athletes or sports figures yourself.

Or, you may want to [illegible] in local athletes or other sports figures to be the subject of the press conference interviews and to act as outside resource persons (ORPs) for this unit.

Procedure

A. Focus Activity—Introduction to Sports and the Media

1. Tell students that for the next three lessons, they are going to look at how the media (television) reports the news. They are going to explore this topic by reporting the news themselves, i.e., they are going to become network news teams covering different sports personalities and events.

   Explain that students are also going to explore the responsibility the media has in covering sports and other newsworthy issues.

   Distribute **Handout A—Sports and the Media** and ask students to read it.

2. Hold a brief discussion by asking the following questions:

   - How do you think networks decide which stories will be put on the air?
   - Do you think audiences want to see brawls and other examples of poor sportsmanship on television sportscasts? Why or why not?
   - Do you think that television coverage of sports encourages poor sportsmanship among young athletes? Why or why not?
   - What is the responsibility of the media in its coverage of sports events?
   - What is the responsibility of the media in its coverage of broader issues in the news? Is it the same as for sports events?

B. Small Group Activity—Forming Network News Teams

1. Tell students that they are going to role play:

   - Athletes and other sports figures at a news conference.
   - Sports reporters from different networks.

   Athletes and other sports figures will answer questions about an issue that concerns them or their team.

   Sports reporters will interview athletes and other sports figures at press conferences and gather information to present as a television sportscast.

2. Divide the class into five groups. Choose one student from each group to role play the athlete or sports figure being questioned at each press conference.

3. Tell the other students that they have just become members of a sports news team for a major television network. Explain that each network news team will send a sports reporter to each of the five press conferences.

   You will need five reporters in each news team, one for each of the five press conferences. Students not assigned to a press conference should assist reporters in taking notes.

4. Distribute **Press Packets** (Reporter's Handbook and press passes) to all news team members.

5. Tell students that they are going to use the methods in the **Reporter's Handbook** and the information in **Handout B—Sports Wire Stories** to write one question for each athlete or sports figure at the five press conferences. Each news team should work together to:

   - Review the tips in the Reporter's Handbook.
   - Write questions.

   Tell reporters to make sure they do not ask the same questions. Allow 20 minutes for news team reporters to prepare their questions.

C. Small Group Activity—Athletes and Other Sports Figures

1. Distribute **Handout B—Sports Wire Stories** and **Handout C—The Inside Track** to the five students who have been chosen to role play the athletes and other sports figures.

2. Explain that Handout C gives them "behind the scenes" information about their characters. Tell them to review both handouts. They will need to be familiar with their Sports Wire story and The Inside Track to respond to reporters' questions at the press conference.

Reminder: You may want to prepare students ahead of time to develop the athletes or sports figures they will play at the press conference.

You may want to role-play one of the athletes or sports figures yourself.

Or, you may want to bring in local athletes or other sports figures to role-play as press conference interviewees and to act as outside resource persons (ORPs) for the simulation.

D. Small Group Activity—The Press Conferences

1. While the news team reporters are formulating their questions, arrange the students who are role-playing athletes and sports figures at five separate Press Tables.

2. Send one reporter from each news team to each press conference. Tell reporters that they will have one minute each, for a total of five minutes to interview the athlete or sports figure at each press conference. Remind them to watch the clock! Reporters have deadlines to meet.

3. After each five-minute period, have each reporting group conclude their press conference and proceed to the next Press Table. Continue this process until all reporting groups have interviewed all the athletes and sports figures featured in the Sports Wire Stories.

   Be sure that students adhere to the five-minute time limit for each conference.

E. Debrief—The Network News Teams Reconvene

1. Have the reporters from each network news team reconvene and compare notes from the press conferences. Each reporter should have notes for each question they asked the five athletes and sports figures.

2. Distribute **Handout D—Sports Scoreboard**. Explain that Handout D is the report of all the games for the day. Tell students that, in the next lesson, each network news team will create a two-minute television sportcast with information from:

   - their own interview questions,
   - the Sports Wire Stories (Handout B), and
   - game results from Handout D.

Enrichment Activity—Analyzing the Sports News

To get ideas for producing their own sportscast, have students evaluate a television sportscast.

Tell students to watch a television sports news broadcast before the next lesson. Students should use the Sportscast Evaluation Sheet from their Reporter's Handbook to record notes on their evaluation.

Lesson Two: Preparing a Television Sportscast

Materials and Preparation

- Flip charts or butcher paper and markers for sportscast graphics
- Reporter's Handbook (from previous lesson)
- Handouts B, C, and D (from previous lesson)
- **Handout E—Sportscast Worksheet**—1 per news team

Procedure

A. Focus Activity—Analyzing Television Sportscasts (Optional)

Ask students to briefly report back their findings from watching a television sportscast. Evaluate the sportscast by asking the following questions:

- What kind of stories got the most attention?
- Was the lead story the longest?
- Which story was the most important?
- Was sensationalism an important part of the sportscast?
- Did reporters and anchor persons give opinions about stories or just the facts?

B. Small Group Activity—Broadcast Preparation

1. Tell students that today, their network news team is going to prepare and present a 2-minute television sportscast based on the information they gathered from their press conference interviews and **Handouts B, C,** and **D**.
2. Divide the class into the five network news teams from the previous lesson. Distribute a copy of **Handout E—Broadcast Worksheet** to each team. Have each network assign tasks to every member of the group. Tasks are described on Handout E.

   Tell teams to follow the directions on Handout E to prepare their two-minute broadcast.
3. Tell each team that they will not have enough time to use all the information they have gathered. They must decide which information is most important and appropriate for the sportscast.

Note: Students can use flip charts or butcher paper to create graphics or statistical charts. They can also re-create portions of their interviews with athletes and sports figures by having the athlete or sports figure re-enact a "clip" from the press conference.

Lesson Three: Sportscast Presentations

Materials and Preparation

- Flip charts or butcher paper and markers for sportscast graphics
- Reporter's Handbook (from previous lesson)
- Handouts B, C, and D (from previous lesson)
- Handout E—Sportscast Worksheet

Procedure

A. Showtime

Have each network news team present its two-minute broadcast. If possible, allow time for each team to review their material and practice their sportscast before they present them to the class.

B. Reflection/Evaluation

1. Evaluate student broadcasts by asking the rest of the class to discuss the following questions with each news team:

Presentation

- How did each team choose the stories they presented? Why did they choose them?
- How did student sportscasts attract the viewers attention? What worked? What didn't? Why?
- What methods did each news team use for presenting their stories? Were some methods more effective than others in getting the story and its information across to the viewers?

Content

- Did each news team present a fair, well-balanced picture of the story?
- Did reporters violate the athlete's or other sports figure's right to privacy?
- Was the story accurate?

2. Re-evaluate the role of the media in sports by reviewing these Focus Activity questions from Lesson One:
   - How do you think networks decide which stories will be put on the air?
   - Do you think audiences want to see brawls and other examples of poor sportsmanship on television sportscasts? Why or why not?
   - Do you think that television coverage of sports encourages poor sportsmanship among young athletes? Why or why not?
   - What is the responsibility of the media in its coverage of sports events?
   - What is the responsibility of the media in its coverage of the rest of the news? Is it the same as for sports events?

SPORTS AND THE MEDIA

All across America, coaches and referees report an increase in unsportsmanlike conduct among young people in school games.

Why do you think this is happening?

Some people think that young people are simply imitating the behavior of professional athletes. Psychologists call this process *modeling*, or learning behavior by watching it.

Many professional athletes disagree. They believe the problem lies with the media, who often focus attention on brawls and other examples of poor sportsmanship. In turn, many broadcasters argue that the public expects them to report the game—the whole game, including poor conduct.

What do you think?

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SPORTS WIRE STORIES

(1) GRUDNICK RUMORED TO BE TRADED TO SCRAPERS

NEW YORK—Will Grudnick, hockey's six-time Most Valuable Player will be traded on Wednesday, ending a month of rumors about whether he will remain with the Los Angeles Lights. Two sources reported that Grudnick will be traded to the New York Scrapers in exchange for veteran defenseman Trinki Jukelic, two draft choices, and an undisclosed amount of cash.

Grudnick, 34, an unrestricted free agent at the end of the 1996 season, had broken off contract negotiations with the Lights and expressed his desire to play elsewhere.

Grudnick has led the league in scoring an unprecedented eight times in his career. For three seasons in a row, from 1990-93, he led the league in scoring, was voted league MVP, and guided the Lights to league championships. This season, Grudnick has rebounded to be among the league scoring leaders after a disappointing season a year ago.

(2) TENNIS PRO FORCED TO FORFEIT MATCH

MIAMI—Fourth seeded player Claudia Gardner was ejected from the court in a second round match at U.S. Florida Open Tennis Tournament on Wednesday. Her disqualification came as the result of mandatory penalty points leveled against her for disrupting play and berating court officials.

Gardner, 22, became irate when baseline judge Carolyn Johnson ruled against her on a decisive point. Gardner was up 30-0 in the sixth game of the second set and trailed Australian Jeanette Mulder 3-6 and 2-3 in the match. After her confrontation with judge Johnson, Gardner stood on the court and continued to glare at the official, refusing to play. After chair umpire William Parent issued several warnings, Gardner approached umpire Parent. Shouting a series of profanities, Gardner smashed her racquet against the umpire's chair before she was ejected by court officials.

Wednesday was not the first time player Gardner and umpire Parent had exchanged words. Two years ago, Gardner objected to a line call by Parent. After her ejection on Wednesday, Gardner was unavailable for comment.

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(3) VALLEY STATE TEAM THE TARGET OF RACIAL ABUSE

LOS ANGELES—Head Coach Val Schuman and players from the Valley State College basketball team were the subjects of racial epithets and abuse in Arizona on Tuesday night. Valley State lost to host Upper Arizona College 79-72 in a Sunshine Conference game between the league's two top teams.

Schuman reported that the Valley State players were confronted by a hand-painted racist symbol when they walked into the visitors' locker room at Upper Arizona. Schuman also said that the Valley State players were the targets of a number of racial slurs directed at them during the game. The ensuing racial tension resulted in a fight that had to be broken up by the referees and other game officials.

(4) BREAKERS THREATEN MOVE FROM LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES—Gail Armstrong, long-time owner of the Los Angeles Breakers, has threatened to move the Western League baseball team out of the Southland capital if improvements to County Stadium are not made.

Armstrong said that if construction plans are not approved by the Sports Commission this time around, the Breakers will not renew their lease. Currently, the agreement is scheduled to end after the 1996 season. Armstrong claims that proposed renovations call for additional field-level box seats and an increase in the number of corporate boxes.

The Sports Commission has addressed the proposal several times, but has not formally voted on the issue.

(5) ALLEN NAMED NFA'S MAN OF THE YEAR

NEW YORK—Free safety Michael Allen of the Los Angeles Sting Rays was named the Man of the Year by the National Football Association on Tuesday night. The award is given to the player who best exemplifies the values of good citizenship and civic participation.

Allen, an All-Pro for the second consecutive season, led the Sting Rays in both tackles and interceptions last season. He was honored by the league for his efforts in establishing the Be Like Michael Foundation and also serving as the chairman of the Breakers' Professional Athletes for Student Success (PASS) program for elementary school students in Los Angeles.

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THE INSIDE TRACK

Background to Sports Wire Story #1 Your name is Joseph Smithers. You are the agent for a hockey star named Will Grudnick.

1. You are seeking a two-year contract for Grudnick that will be worth more than any other hockey player's contract.

2. Grudnick is a very popular player. His departure from the Lights will cause fan attendance to drop sharply, causing the Lights to lose money.

3. Grudnick wants to move to New York to play with the Scrapers. He will be getting additional endorsement opportunities. You want to keep rumors down before the Scrapers deal is complete.

4. You are asking for a deadline one week from today for a deal to be made trading him and for acquiring new players like Milt Mason to help the Lights win.

5. Grudnick says that if the deadline passes without action, he will not sign with the Lights after his contract expires at the end of the season.

6. You are not responsible for getting the Lights players that will have the same value as Grudnick.

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THE INSIDE TRACK

Background to Sports Wire Story #2 Your name is Claudia Gardner. You are a professional tennis player.

1. Days later, you are still upset at the ruling and your loss of the match.

2. Failure to make yourself available to the media after a match is an automatic $2000 fine.

3. You are critical of almost everything about the tournament, including game scheduling, locker room facilities, hotel accommodations, and the condition of the playing surface.

4. You had an argument with the same chair umpire in this tournament two years ago.

5. A week before the tournament, a major tennis manufacturer canceled your endorsement contract due to an earlier on-court incident.

6. You have not been playing well this season.

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THE INSIDE TRACK

Background to Sports Wire Story #3 Your name is Val Schuman. You are head coach of the Valley State basketball team.

1. You are angry. You want retribution for what happened to your players.

2. The symbol painted in the locker room was a swastika. You are reluctant to identify the symbol, but you will, if pushed by reporters.

3. There are no suspects for this crime. You have talked to the police and the school administration of Upper Arizona College. They do not believe that the perpetrators will ever be found.

4. You believe that the racism your players suffered caused them to lose focus and, consequently, the game. You believe that the fight that broke out (causing a technical foul) gave the Upper Arizona team points it did not deserve.

5. You are angry that Upper Arizona College has released no statement regarding punishment for the perpetrators if they are caught.

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THE INSIDE TRACK

Background to Sports Wire Story #4 Your name is Gail Armstrong. You are the long-time owner of the Los Angeles Breakers, a professional baseball team.

1. Your team has been losing $10 million per year for the past three years.

2. You believe that the difference between making or losing money is a renovated stadium. You have made a proposal to the sports commission that they renovate the stadium.

3. The Sports Commission is meeting in the next week to consider the proposal again.

4. If they do not, you are considering moving your team to a new retractable domed stadium in Portland which has all the desired corporate boxes and seating.

5. Taxpayer cost of the stadium renovation is estimated at $90 million. Estimated revenue benefits for Los Angeles is $190 million per year in the form of jobs, sales tax, and tourism.

6. Your entire fortune is based on your family's long-term ownership of the Los Angeles Breakers.

7. Your team's performance and attendance seem to be off during these troubling times. This may have a negative impact on future player acquisitions and contract negotiations.

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THE INSIDE TRACK

Background to Sports Wire Story #5 Your name is Michael Allen. You are a player for the Stingrays, a Los Angeles professional football team.

1. Your "Be Like Michael" Foundation runs a program for middle school students with learning disabilities.

2. You became active in charity work as a result of watching your mother get great satisfaction from doing volunteer work.

3. You overcame childhood dyslexia (a general term used for a number of reading disabilities; its most common form involves mixing up of letters within words).

4. As part of the PASS program, you paid for airline tickets, hotel rooms, and game tickets for 30 disadvantaged elementary school children to attend a Sting Ray road game.

5. Students were eligible only if they had maintained perfect attendance at their schools. At that game, you promised the students that you would intercept a pass and score a touchdown in the game—you did!

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SPORTS SCOREBOARD

Exhibition Baseball

Los Angeles	5	Philadelphia	4

(2 home runs and 5 RBI for L.A. catcher Mickey Post)

College Basketball

Upper Arizona	79	Valley State	72
Orange State	86	Metro College	68

Pro Basketball

Denver	106	New Orleans	104

(36 points, 14 rebounds for Derrick Jones, N.O.)

Miami	98	Baltimore	92
New York	92	St. Louis	86

(Bennie Williams, N.Y., ejected in first qtr. for fighting)

Hockey

Boston	2	Minneapolis	2 (OT)
Chicago	4	Pittsburgh	3
Detroit	2	Montreal	0

(Tenth straight loss for Montreal)

Track and Field

American Tracey Gilliam, World Indoor Record, Womens' 400 meters, 49.54 sec. in meet in Madrid, Spain.

Soccer (exhibition match)

United States	2	Mexico	1

(54,000 fans at L.A.'s County Stadium)

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REPORTER'S HANDBOOK

Sports and the Law

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INTERVIEW ANSWERS

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INTERVIEW ANSWERS

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HOW TO CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW

Getting a good interview at a press conference takes a lot of skill. Reporters need to be able to answer the questions What?, Who?, When?, Where?, How?, and Why? in any story they write. You need to ask questions that will in turn give you answers to those basic questions. Here are some tips for gathering the information you will need:

- **Plan ahead.** Write down your questions ahead of time. It's easy to forget things in the confusion of a press conference.
- **Making contact.** Be patient and polite. Introduce yourself and the network you work for. Ask your question as clearly and simply as possible.
- **Keep on track.** Some people ramble and change the subject when they talk. Make sure the person answers your question...you only have one chance!
- **Take it all down.** Make sure you get the facts. Without good notes, you may not be able to remember what was said.

WHAT MAKES NEWS?

News has to be factual, but it must also be presented in an interesting way. A newscast doesn't broadcast all the news. There isn't enough time. News programs broadcast what they think is interesting to most people.

Interesting news stories usually contain some of the following elements:

- **Timeliness.** Something just happened or is going to happen very soon.
- **Proximity.** Something that happens locally often attracts interest more than something that is happening far away.
- **Prominence.** People are interested in well-known people, places, events, important dates and crucial situations.
- **Consequences.** How many people will a story affect? How deeply will it affect them and for how long?
- **Human interest.** A dramatic, personal story about people has universal appeal.
- **Suspense.** People want to know...what's going to happen next?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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IINTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **Out of the ordinary.** Dog bites man is not news. Man bites dog *is* news.
- **Conflict.** Sports competition, differing interest, points of view, a labor strike attract attention.
- **Progress.** Improvements in performance, a new record set, humankind moving forward makes news.
- **Age.** A person who does things expected of someone younger or older raises interest.
- **Humor.** People like to laugh. What happens when a player scores a goal for the wrong team?

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HOW TO WRITE A NEWS STORY

Most descriptive writing traces a series of events from beginning, to climax, to conclusion. When you write a news story, you write backwards. To write a news story:

- Begin with the climax, or the most interesting, exciting, and important facts. A news writer must start by answering the questions Who?, What?, When?, and Where?
- Next, describe facts that answer the questions How? and Why?

This style of writing attracts attention, gives the viewer the most important details quickly, and allows the broadcast team to stay inside the time limits of the show.

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SPORTSCAST EVALUATION SHEET

Analyze a television sportscast. Briefly write down the following information on a separate sheet of paper. Describe each story in the order it was broadcast.

Subject. Was it about a person, a game, a business deal?

Location. Where did the story take place? On the field, in the locker room, at a news conference?

Length. How long was the story in seconds? Which story was the longest?

Depth of coverage. Does the story go deeper than the facts? Does it talk about causes and effects of an incident or issue?

Graphics. What pictures or video clips accompany the story? Does an anchor person or field reporter appear in the story?

Sensationalism. Does a story use controversy, violence or other sensational elements to grab your attention? Rate this story from one to 10.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not Sensational **Sensational**

Which stories got the most attention? Was the lead story the longest? The most important?

Broadcast Worksheet

Imagine that you are members of a network news team. Your task is to create a two-minute sportscast. You will not have enough time to use all the information you have gathered. You must decide which information is the most important for the sportscast.

1. Work together as a team to decide what information is the most important.
2. The chart below describes the tasks that need to be completed before you present your two-minute sportscast. Assign tasks to each member of your team.

Task	Job Description	Team Member(s)
Writer(s)	Create(s) script for anchor person(s).	1. 2.
Graphic Artist(s)	Create(s) and present(s) graphics to illustrate stories.	1. 2.
Director/ Timekeeper	Keeps sportscast under two minutes; starts and stops sportscast.	
Anchor Person(s)	Report(s) news from scripts; cues graphics and field reports.	1. 2.
Field Reporter	Reports from locations.	

3. Determine the order and length of news stories. Be sure to ask: Is this story important? Do you want or need to use sensationalism? Is it ethical/fair to broadcast this story on television?
4. Decide which stories need graphics, reports from locations, replays from press conferences.
5. Write scripts for anchor person(s) and field reporter.
6. Rehearse your scripts, replays, graphic presentations. How long does each story take?
7. Watch the clock! As sportscasters, you must meet deadlines.

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Press Conference # 1

Reporter:_____

Press Conference # 3

Reporter:_____

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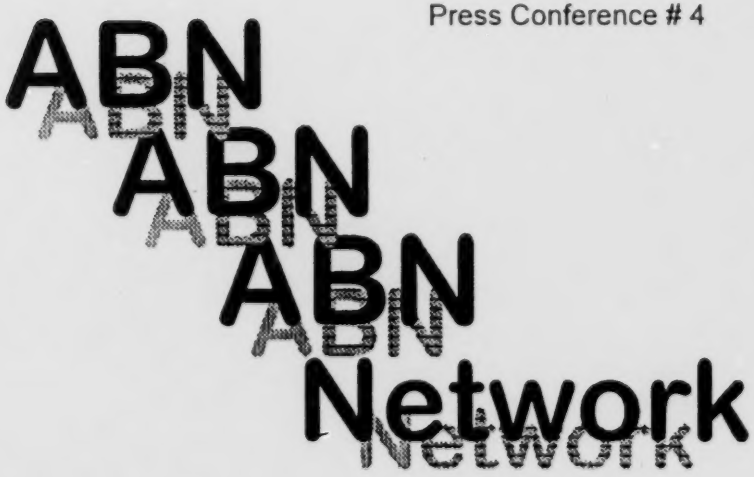
Press Conference # 2

Reporter:_____

Press Conference # 4



Reporter:_____

Press Conference # 5

Reporter:_____

Press Conference # 5

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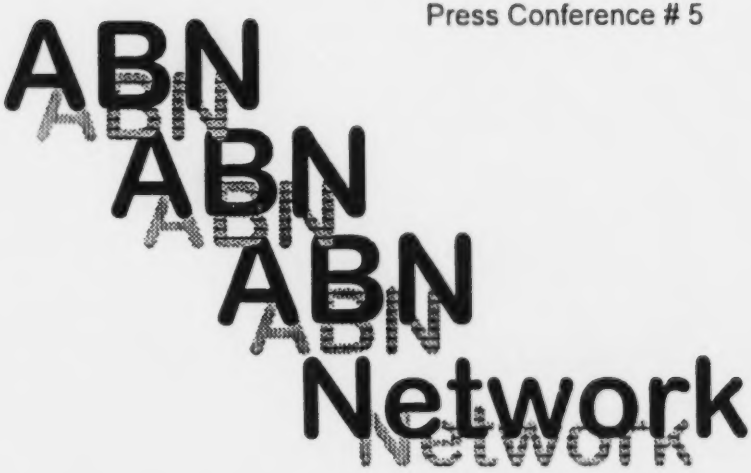
Press Conference # 5



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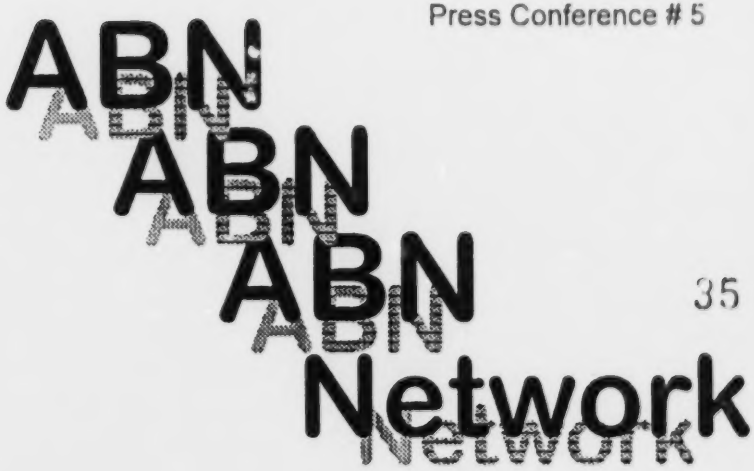
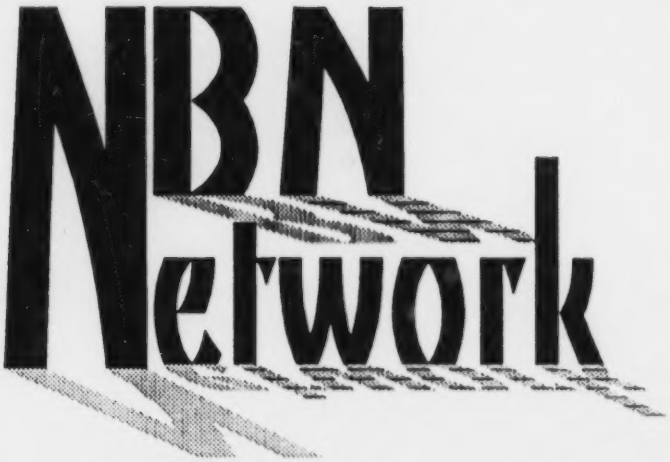


Reporter:_____



Press Conference # 1

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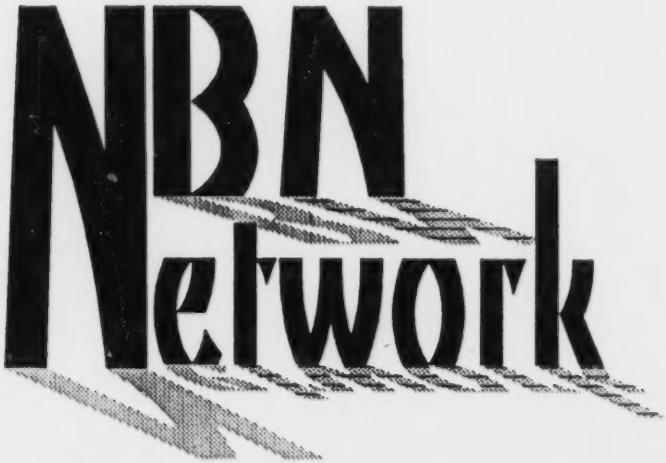

Press Conference # 3

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Press Conference # 2

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Press Conference # 4

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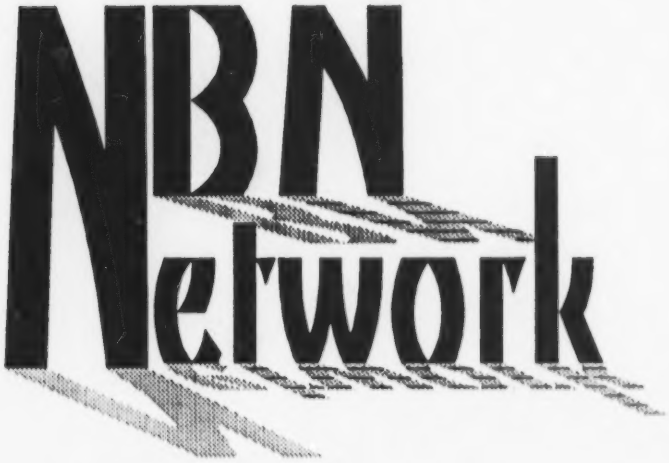

Press Conference # 5

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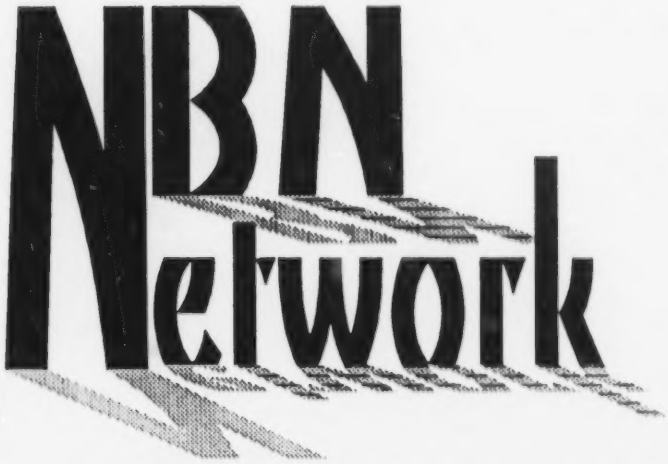

Press Conference # 5

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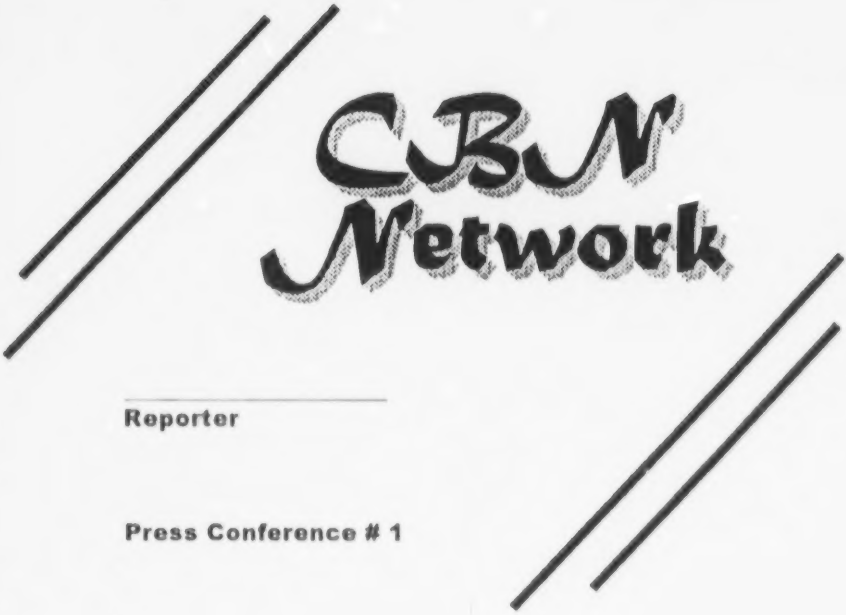

Reporter

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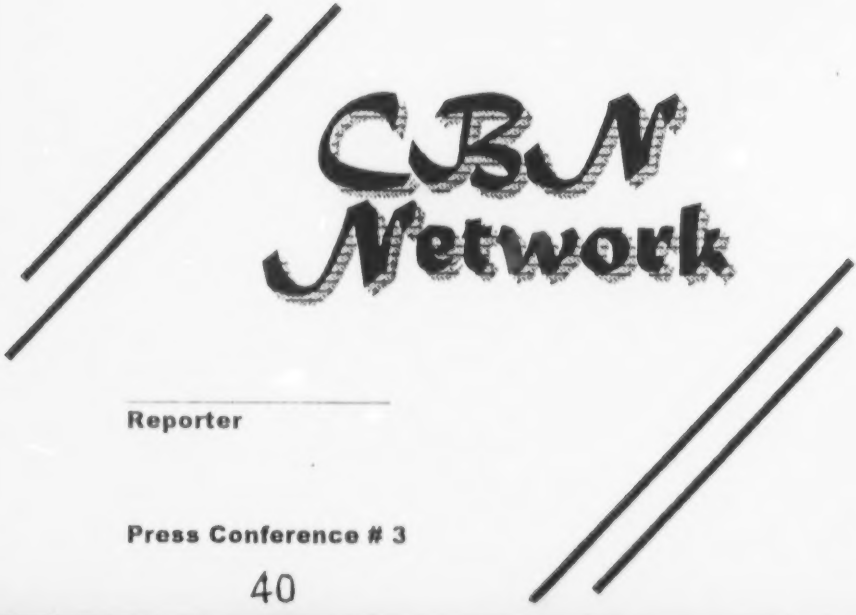

Reporter

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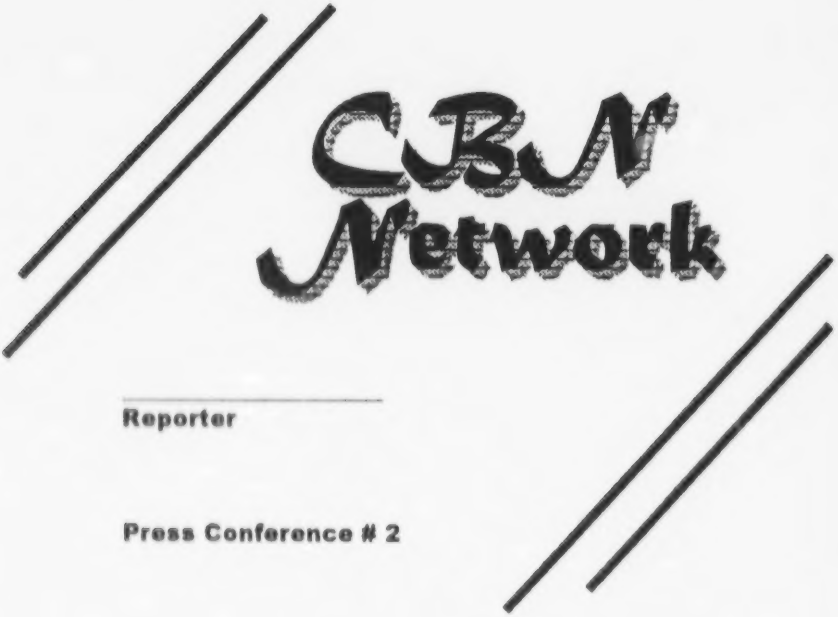

Reporter

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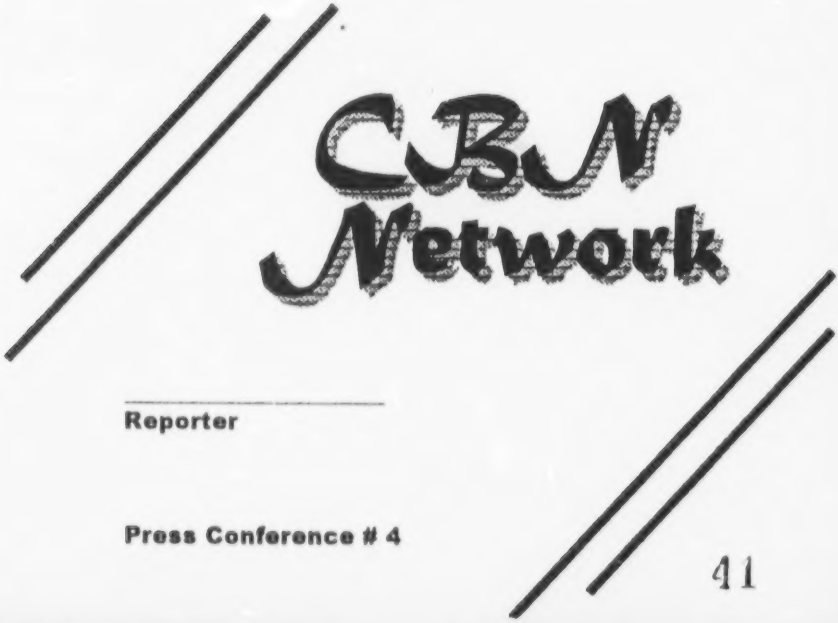

Reporter

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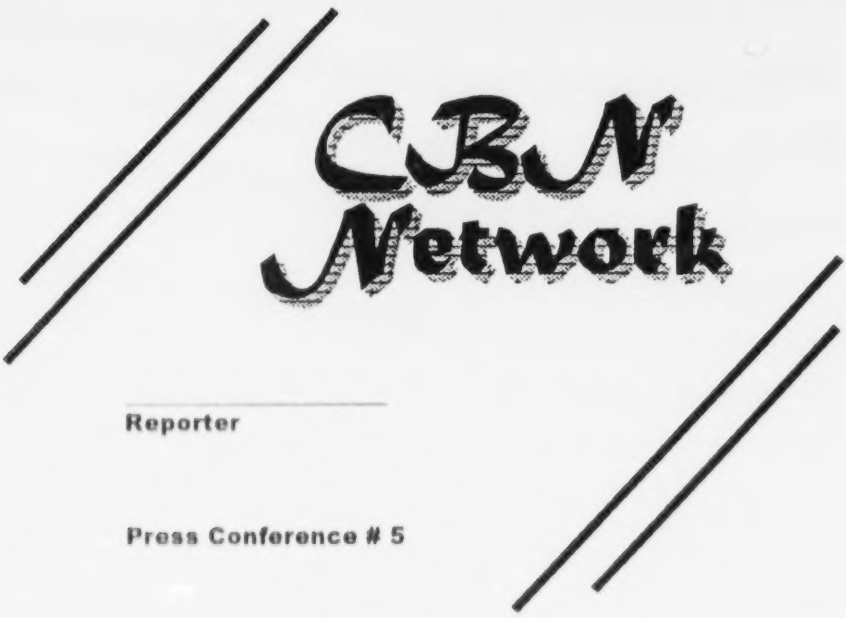
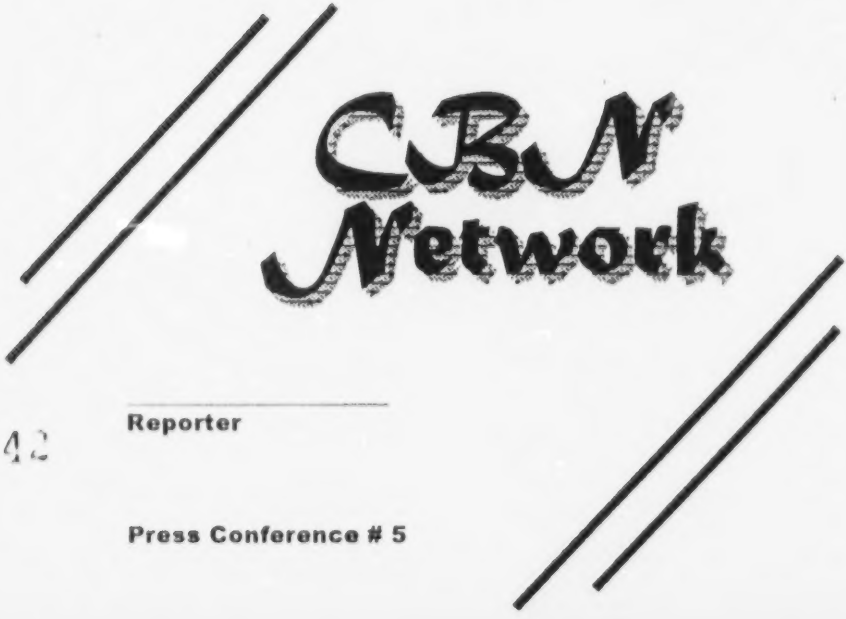


Reporter

Press Conference # 5



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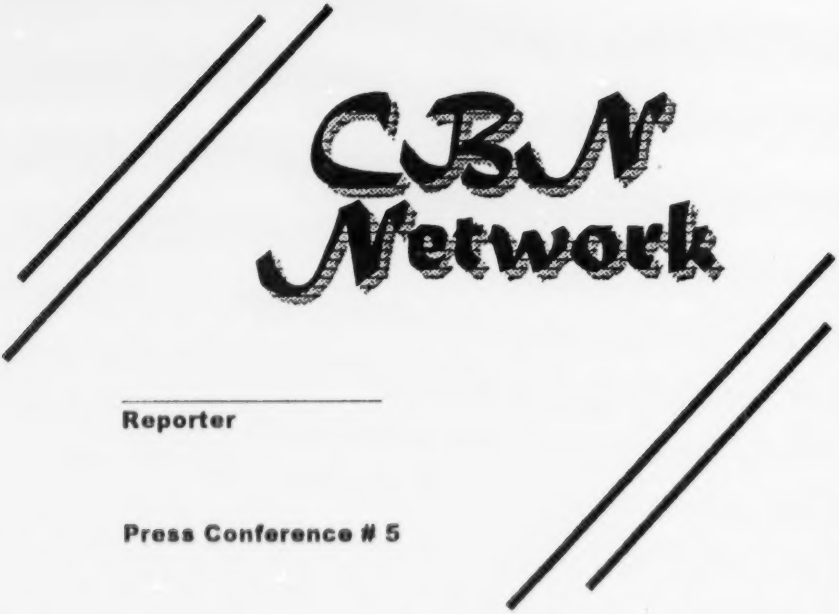
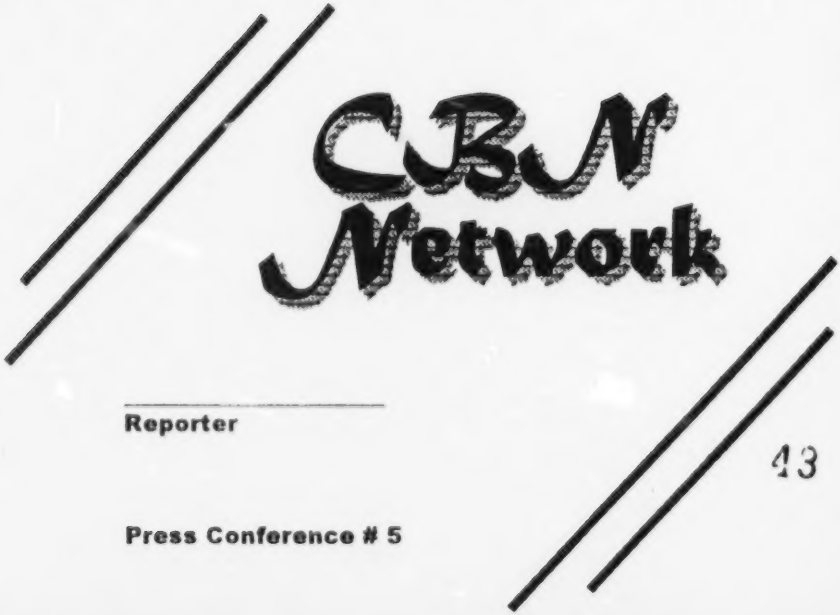
Press Conference # 5



Reporter

Press Conference # 5



Reporter

Press Conference # 5

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Press Conference # 1

The Sports Tube

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Press Conference # 3

The Sports Tube

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Press Conference # 2

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Press Conference # 4

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